



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
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**Monday, December 5, 2011**

**10:00 AM**

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (11-5409)

**Attachments:** [AUDIO](#)

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Berger, Vice Chair Kang, Vice Chair Friedman, Commissioner Biondi, Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner Savelle, Commissioner Sorkin and Commissioner Trevino-Powell

Excused: Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney, Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Olivas and Commissioner Williams

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Call to order. (11-5245)

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:05 a.m.**

2. Introduction of December 5, 2011, meeting attendees. (11-5246)

**Self-introductions were made.**

3. Approval of the Agenda of December 5, 2011. (11-5247)

**On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Savelle (Commissioners Kang, Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent), this item was approved.**

**DRAFT**

4. Approval of the Minutes from the meetings of October 17, 2011, November 7, 2011 and November 21, 2011. (11-4762)

**On motion of Commissioner Rudnick, seconded by Commissioner Franzen (Commissioners Kang, Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent) the minutes for October 17, 2011 were approved.**

**After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Savelle, seconded by Commissioner Friedman, the minutes for the November 7, 2011 were duly carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** 9 - Chair Curry, Vice Chair Berger, Vice Chair Kang, Vice Chair Friedman, Commissioner Biondi, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner Savelle, Commissioner Sorkin and Commissioner Trevino-Powell

**Abstentions:** 1 - Commissioner Franzen

**Excused:** 5 - Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney, Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Olivas and Commissioner Williams

**After further discussion, on motion of Commissioner Franzen, seconded by Commissioner Savelle (Commissioners Kang, Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent) the minutes for November 21, 2011 were approved.**

**Attachments:** [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - 10/17/11](#)  
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - 11-7-11](#)  
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - 11-21-11](#)

## **II. REPORTS**

5. Chair's Report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for December 5, 2011. (11-5248)

**Chair Curry reported the following:**

- **The Commission's Holiday Luncheon will take place immediately following the Commission's Regular meeting today, December 5, 2011.**
- **Effective today, December 5, 2011, digital recordings of meetings will be available to members of the public via a link on the Commission's minutes and available on the website.**

**Commissioner Sorkin provided the Commission with an update on the Early Child Development Symposium – Bridging the Gap Between**

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Science and Policy, held on November 10, 2011, which was also attended by Commissioners Franzen and Kleinberg, sharing the following information reported at the Symposium:

Casey Family Program Managing Director Kimberly Ricketts indicated that younger children, especially babies younger than one, enter the child protective system at consistently higher rates than older children. The DCFS Fact Sheet from July 2011 indicates that children from birth through the age of four represent 31.4 percent of the children under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Forty percent of babies who enter the child welfare system, enter within the first month of life, and that 18 percent of youths who "age out" of the welfare system at age 18, entered when they were younger than three years of age.

Other event presenters included Interim DCFS Director Phillip Browning, Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, and Mathew Melmed, Executive Director of ZERO TO THREE, who reported the following:

Interim Director Philip Browning

- Communication within the child welfare system is one of the biggest challenges. Policy makers and service providers should keep common sense, critical thinking and accountability in mind.

Dr. Jack Shonkoff

- Neglect and adversity affect a child's brain in profound ways and lead to long-term cognitive, social, physical and developmental problems.

Mathew Melmed

- ZERO TO THREE is a non-profit that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. Mr. Melmed recommended the following:
  - Making healthy development a priority within the child welfare system.
  - Ensuring that displaced babies have the opportunity to foster a strong bond with an adult by having pre-removal consultations and frequent visits with family.
  - Increasing access to a wider range of early services, like those that address fetal alcohol syndrome.
  - Cultivating family and community partnerships.
  - Using data and research to make informed choices.

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**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Kang, Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent), this item was received and filed.**

6. Report by Dr. Marvin J. Southard, Director, Department of Mental Health, on the new Health Care Reform and its impact on funding of mental health services for foster youth. (11-5267)

**There was no report given or action taken.**

### **III. DISCUSSION**

7. Discussion and approval of a letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Title IV-E Waiver.
- Helen Kleinberg, Commissioner (11-5269)

**During discussion, on recommendation of the Commission and at the suggestion of Commissioner Biondi, grammatical and substantive changes were made to the draft letter to read as follows:**

#### **Page 1, Paragraph 1**

**At the Commission for Children and Families (Commission) meeting held on November 21, 2011, the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation presented strategies for the Title IV-E Waiver (Waiver) budget. While the Commission has been very supportive of the Waiver and its proposed enhancements and expansion, the Commission is concerned with the following information and strategies from the DCFS/Probation presentation:**

#### **Page 1, Paragraph 2**

**A significant amount of Waiver funding has been spent over the last six years on up-front assessments under the Family Preservation contracts. It is our understanding that the Family Preservation providers' contracts are currently being evaluated. It is not clear to us whether the evaluation being done includes: 1) an outcome study to determine if children have experienced better outcomes as a result of the up-front assessments; 2) whether there is a better assessment strategy than the up-front assessments; 3) or whether changes based on the evaluation should be implemented.**

#### **Page 2, Paragraph 1**

**We recommend DCFS explore the feasibility of using Waiver funds to increase permanency for children and families in the child welfare system. Small studies conducted by DCFS have shown a need to**

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commit resources to promote family visitation, transition children home and provide immediate aftercare services in the community. Data from DCFS on the timelines to reunification show little change from August 2009 through October 2011. In addition, re-entry into foster care rates are 12 percent. In order to create systems change, resources from the Waiver funds need to be invested in the above reunification efforts.

**Add to page, as Paragraph 5**

“Additionally, we respectfully request that your Board keep us informed on any actions taken to address these issues, and contact me if our Commission can assist in the process.”

After, discussion, at the suggestion of Commissioner Biondi and on motion of Commissioner Berger, seconded by Commissioner Biondi (Commissioners Kleinberg, McClaney, Murray, Olivas, Williams, and Vice Chair Kang being absent), the letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding Title IV-E Waiver, was approved in concept with the recommended changes noted above.

**Attachments:**     [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - DRAFT](#)  
                                 [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - FINAL](#)

8. Discussion and approval of a letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Title IV-E Waiver and Aftercare Services.
- Patricia Curry, Chair (11-5289)

Commissioner Biondi made a motion to include the following in the draft letter to the Board of Supervisors:

“The Commission respectfully requests that that you keep us apprised of any action taken by your Board in addressing aftercare services. If you have any questions, or if we can be helpful in participating in any meetings involving the review of IV-E Waiver strategies addressing aftercare, please let me know.”

Therefore, on motion of Commissioner Biondi, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick (Commissioners Kleinberg, McClaney, Murray, Olivas, Williams, and Vice Chair Kang being absent), the letter to the Board of Supervisor regarding Title IV-E Waiver was approved in concept with the recommended changes noted above.

**Attachments:**     [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - DRAFT](#)  
                                 [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - FINAL](#)

#### **IV. WORKGROUP UPDATE**

**9. Court Disproportionality Workgroup**

- Stacey Savelle, Commission Representative (11-5250)
  - **The Los Angeles Policy Workgroup on Disproportionality and Disparities Workgroup (Workgroup), also known as the Court Disproportionality Workgroup was formed in 2008.**
  - **Disproportionality refers to both the over representation of children of color in foster care and disparate outcomes experienced by these children. It can exist at all decision points in the system.**
  - **The Workgroup was originally co-chaired by Patricia Ploehn, Assistant Chief Executive Officer and Judge Michael Nash, Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Juvenile Court and was originally facilitated by Casey Family Programs until DCFS administrators began facilitating the meetings on a rotational basis.**
  - **There is strong evidence that minority youth have been disproportionately represented within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. While African-American and Native-American are the most overrepresented, the group looks at all minority youth.**
  - **The Workgroup recently reviewed a study supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation titled, “Young Adult Outcomes Of Youth Exiting Dependent Or Delinquent Care In Los Angeles County.” This study reported outcomes for Probation, DCFS and Crossover youth. Additionally the Workgroup is reviewing the disproportionate amount of African American youth exiting the system with regards to Assembly Bill 12 (AB12).**

**Other focuses of the Workgroup include the following projects and initiatives:**

- **Undoing Racism Workshops**
- **Bench card for courts with reflection questions for hearing officers**
- **Court user survey**
- **CAPP - California Partners for Permanency Project**
- **Local level action plans**
- **Improving the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) certification process**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent) this item was received and filed.**

**V. PRESENTATION**

- 10. Presentation on the Department of Children and Families' (DCFS) Strategic Plan.**
- Mitch Mason, Division Chief, Office of Strategy Management, DCFS (11 5268)**

**Mr. Mason made a verbal report on the following:**

- In July 2009, DCFS formed a Strategy Management Steering Committee. Since then there has been significant change to the DCFS Executive Team in the last two years. As a result, it has been difficult to do strategic planning amidst all of the change. However, a strong strategic direction that can be adjusted accordingly can improve outcomes, quality of services and address the issues that the Commission has historically raised.**
- Ms. Chrissie Castro, with the Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (WPIC) has been providing technical assistance under a grant to DCFS. In January 2010, with the assistance of WPIC, DCFS conducted a series of strategy focus sessions. DCFS conducted 90 sessions, across all DCFS Regional Offices and all programs. The sessions involved all stakeholders such as; parents, youth, relative caregivers, foster parents and reached out to the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) members.**

**However, the Commission was not included at the time because DCFS did not want to include high level stakeholders.**

- In April and May 2010, DCFS conducted six regional convening's based on the Family to Family Model. After the conclusion of all meetings, a meeting was convened with the DCFS Bureau of Finance and Administration to review the work compiled from the strategy sessions.**
- DCFS received assistance from the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources who suggested tying in the DCFS Strategic Plan to Management Appraisal and Performance Plan (MAPP) goals. In the fall of 2010, the DCFS Executive Team conducted several meetings to out-of-home care. DCFS is revisiting this goal from a**



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strength-based perspective to determine how DCFS can safely prevent the removal of children from their home unless it is necessary. By increasing the intensity and quality of in-home preventive services, DCFS can prevent the developmental damage, especially to young children, when they are removed from their home.

- In addition to the existing three DCFS goals, three more goals were added:
  - Goal IV: Self Sufficiency – Added by the Board of Supervisors
  - Goal V: Improved child and family well-being – This goal ties with the current collaboration between DCFS, Department of Mental Health, Public Health and Health Services.
  - Goal VI: Improved organizational excellence – DCFS has identified basic business functions that need to be addressed, such as technology and real time access.
- DCFS has also been working on the Data Driven Decision Making Program. The goal of the Program is to analyze why DCFS numbers go up or down. The DCFS Strategic Plan will provide baseline data and the newly adopted Katie A. exit conditions will provide targets for DCFS performance improvements over the next few years.
- Upon Mr. Browning's appoint as Interim Director of DCFS, he instructed staff to immediately begin updating the DCFS Strategic Plan. Mr. Browning requested that the DCFS Strategic Plan be as inclusive as possible. Therefore, over 60 meetings involving 900 DCFS employees were conducted.
- DCFS employees that were unable to attend those meetings, but still wanted to submit ideas for the Strategic Plan, were provided with the Strategic Planning Survey. As of Friday, December 2, 2011, 2,515 surveys have been completed. The target date for completion of the DCFS Strategic Plan has been set for February 1, 2012. The DCFS Strategic Plan will also include the Katie A. Strategic Plan/Exit Strategy, First 5 LA, AB 12, and the Title IV-E Waiver.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Mason added the following:



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- He would follow up with the DCFS staff on mentoring to determine if it is a strategy that can be included in the DCFS Strategic Plan.
  - During the DCFS regional convening's, the faith-based community was invited and many of the meetings were co-led by members of the faith-based community.

The Commission inquired why they were not included in the planning and discussion of the DCFS Strategic Plan.

Interim Director Browning indicated that DCFS is taking a different approach to the Strategic Plan from the past. He noted that he would like the process to be as inclusive as possible. Interim Director Browning further added that the Commission can have a real impact once the draft is completed and indicated that the DCFS Strategic Plan will not be finalized without the Commission's input.

Mr. Mason indicated that the Commission may return their completed DCFS Strategic Planning Survey by December 20, 2011.

The Commission expressed concern with the actual implementation of the DCFS Strategic Plan. In the past, the strategic plan process took a long time to complete. As a result by the time it was finally completed, DCFS had a new Director who either started a new plan or shelved the existing one.

Interim Director Browning reassured the Commission that, an individual will be responsible for each action item on the DCFS Strategic Plan to ensure accountability. Furthermore, he welcomed any member of the Commission participate on action items.

Mr. Mason further added that:

- Communication is the key to success. The County is so large and complex, no one individual can know it all. As a result, DCFS and the County must work together to increase communication and ties between the funding streams, program levels, as well as promote community involvement to find opportunities to blend funds and resources.
- There are three areas where DCFS has a clear leadership role:
  - Title IV-E Waiver renewal
  - Implementation of AB 12 with the Probation Department

- **Collaboration with DMH and the mental health service provider community to meet the exit condition of the Katie A. lawsuit.**
- **The Commission raised a valid point in that the County lacks funding for program evaluations. For example, the DCFS Data Driven Decision Making Program does not include an evaluation component; however, a meeting was recently held with Jacquelyn McCroskey, from the University of Southern California's School of Social Work to develop an evaluation plan and benchmark. However, due to the economic downturn and the potential cuts to social services from the State of California, funding to develop an evaluation plan is scarce.**
- **Collaboration between the media and DCFS is included within the DCFS Strategic Plan; however this effort must be coordinated in conjunction with the Chief Executive Office's Public Affairs Division.**
- **The Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project has been included within the third sequence of the Title IV-Waiver.**

**The Commission requested that DCFS provide a follow up report on the current technological resources available to social workers.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners Kleinberg, Olivas, McClaney, Murray, and Williams being absent) this item was received and filed.**

#### **VII. DCFS INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- 11. DCFS Interim Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Interim Director, DCFS. (11-5249)**

**This item was taken off calendar.**

#### **VII. MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Announcements**

- 12. Announcements for the meeting of December 5, 2011. (11-5251)**

**There were none.**

**Matters Not Posted**

13. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-5252)

**There were none.**

**Public Comment**

14. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (11-5253)

**No members of the public addressed the Commission.**

**Adjournment**

15. Adjournment for the meeting of December 5, 2011. (11-5254)

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.**